



From Our Vicar

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The Elusive Path to Peace

Palm Sunday has become symbolic of Peace – with marches and rallies for peace being held on this day in Melbourne every year. Why is this? The inspiration seems to come from the prophecy of Zechariah.

‘Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

It goes on to say that the Lord will ‘take away the chariots ... and the war-horses ... and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations.’ 9:9-10

When Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on a donkey instead of on a war-horse, he was making a very clear statement about the nature of the kingdom he was bringing in. As he said soon after to Pilate – ‘My kingdom is not of this world, otherwise my followers would fight to prevent my arrest ... ’ John 18:36.

In a sign of respect, General Edmund Allenby of the Allied Egyptian Expeditionary Force chose similarly to enter Jerusalem on foot after the defeat of the Turkish forces at Beersheba led to the conquest of Jerusalem on 11 Dec 1917. This contrasted with Kaiser Wilhelm II who was considered arrogant by the inhabitants when, in 1898, he entered Jerusalem on a white horse.

We may well ask, where is the peace Jesus came to bring?

But, this is the nature of peace. It cannot be imposed, it needs to be chosen. In whatever context we might reflect upon, it flows from a process of listening with humility, acknowledging wrongs done and extending forgiveness, the enacting of just restoration where possible, and the determination to live differently. Where there are deeply embedded attitudes and self-justifying beliefs, peace remains distant.

Our challenge is to not become indifferent in the face of complexity and overwhelming human suffering, but to continue to cry out to the God who himself cried over Jerusalem and over those who did not acknowledge the way to peace that was holding its hands out to them.

May we model this process that makes for peace in our own context and relationships -as far as it depends on us. May we cry out to the one who is the Prince of Peace, that his rule will be received in human hearts.

Grace and peace to you,

Wayne